

Bates stars in sound Wycombe Wanderers attack

Sports Mail Special Report

WYCOMBE Wanderers showed vastly improved form in the fast and hotly-contested first half of their Isthmian League game against Tooting and Mitcham, and Paul Bates, returning to the side in his best form, claimed two fine goals to give them half-time advantage.

Wycombe: Brown; Beck, Atkins; Thomas, Fisher, D Worley; Rockell, L Worley, Holmes, Bates, Tomlin.

Tooting: Pearson; Holder Good; Holden, Bennett, Wright; Hasty, Moore, Clay, Roberts, Griffiths.

Referee: A Bedford (St. Albans).

The Wanderers soon threatened with a sparkling move started by Bates, forcing a corner in the first minute. But from the kick Rockell headed tamely into the goalkeeper's hands.

Tooting were soon in purposeful action, but Beck did well to block a shot by Clay with Brown out of position, and then Brown stopped a crashing shot by Welsh international winger Griffiths.

Exchanges were fast and full of incident, each side attacking swiftly in turn, and Bates and Worley figured in some promising home advances which fully extended the Tooting defence.

One of the best goals seen on the ground this season gave Wycombe the lead after 15 minutes when BATES taking a pass from Tomlin, smashed in a spectacular long range shot which went in off the post.

A little later Holmes almost scored with a shot which sped just wide with the goalkeeper at a loss. There was more urgency about Tooting's retaliation however, and Brown brought off two good saves to stop bearded Paddy Hasty,

always dangerous in his new role on the wing.

A diving header by Holmes from Tomlin's pass was well saved by Pearson and then Bates broke through again but skied his shot.

BATES AGAIN

With Wycombe maintaining the initiative, BATES scored another brilliant goal after 37 minutes from a pass by Rockell, but as Tooting hit back again with renewed vigour ROBERTS scored for them two minutes before half-time after a clever move on the left wing.

Half-time: Wycombe Wan. 2; Tooting and Mitcham 1.

There was again plenty of action in the second half.

Tooting star Paddy Hasty was injured soon after the restart but continued limping on the right wing.

Both sides attacked strongly in turn but prompt tackling kept marksmanship at long range.

Wycombe failed to reproduce their sparkling form of the first half and it was Tooting who generally set the pace, though lack of final punch robbed them of advantage.

Wycombe's most promising advances usually came from the busy Bates and the wing men were rarely in the picture.

RESULT

WYCOMBE WANDERERS 2
TOOTING AND MITCHAM 1

WYCOMBE CAN THANK BATES

Wycombe W. 2 Tooting 1

TWO brilliant goals by Paul Bates gave Wycombe Wanderers the Isthmian League points against Tooting and Mitcham.

Both sides showed considerably improved form on recent displays, but apart from inside-left Bates both lacked speed, resolution, and punch in the middle.

Bates's matchwinners came in the 15th and 37th minutes from passes by Tomlin and Rockell.

They gave Wycombe, the more thrustful, workmanlike side early on, a well deserved half-time lead of 2-1 after Dave Roberts who, with his Welsh international left-wing partner Griffiths, was the visitors' most dangerous raider, had scored for Tooting two minutes before half-time.

Paddy Hasty, playing an unfamiliar role on the right wing after several weeks out of the game, was much less prominent than usual and his effectiveness was not improved by a second-half knee injury which left him limping.

Wycombe's forwards, with the wing-men largely neglected, failed to reproduce their sparkling form of the first half and after the interval rarely looked like beating the agile Wally Pearson again.